

WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL ON
IRAQ**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2003

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call attention to an excellent editorial in today's Washington Post, written by the newspaper's editorial staff. They have presented a definitive summary of why we must act to disarm Iraq in preserving the safety of Americans.

THE CASE FOR ACTION

Even before Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's presentation to the United Nations Security Council today, it is clear that Iraq has not complied with Resolution 1441, which offered it a "final opportunity" to voluntarily disarm. Neither the U.N. weapons inspectors nor any permanent member of the council contends that Iraq has "fully" cooperated, as the resolution requires. Barring a dramatic change of behavior by Saddam Hussein in the coming weeks, that means a military intervention to disarm Iraq would be justified, even if the council passed no further resolutions. Still, there is a larger question that the United States and its allies must answer, and that underlies the debate that will begin: Even if it is lawful, is war the right course? The threshold for deciding on military action must be high, and there are legitimate questions to answer: Is Iraq genuinely a threat to U.S. security, and must it be dealt with now? Given the suffering that every war brings, the potential economic and political costs, and the likelihood of unforeseen consequences, would it be better to settle for a strategy of containing Saddam Hussein through continued U.N. sanctions and inspections? This would involve abandoning the tougher course the Security Council approved by a unanimous vote just 12 weeks ago; but if the Bush administration endorsed it, much of the country—and the world—would approve.

Yet we believe that it would be a mistake for the United States and its allies, confronted with continued intransigence, to shrink again from decisive action in Iraq. Unless unexpected change takes place in Baghdad, the United States should lead a force to remove Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and locate and destroy its chemical and biological weapons and its nuclear program. The Iraqi regime poses a threat not just to the United States but to global order. The removal of Saddam Hussein would advance the task of containing the spread of weapons of mass destruction to rogue states. It also would free millions of Iraqis from deprivation and oppression and make possible a broader movement to reshape the Arab Middle East, where political and economic backwardness have done much to spawn extremists such as al Qaeda. In contrast, a continued failure to act would send dictators and terrorists a devastating message about the impotence of the United States and the United Nations. It would encourage extremists in their rush for nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

That Iraq has the capacity to threaten vital U.S. interests has been clear at least since 1990, when Saddam Hussein's army invaded Kuwait, seized its oil fields and stood ready to move on to Saudi Arabia. Had Saddam Hussein waited the few months that his scientists then needed to complete a nuclear weapon, the United States might not have reversed the invasion; should he acquire them and again seek domination of the Mid-

dle East, the West would face a challenge like that now posed by North Korea, with far higher stakes. The 1991 Persian Gulf War did not eliminate the Iraqi threat, because Saddam Hussein and most of his army and arsenal survived; so the first Bush administration and the Security Council adopted a strategy of containment. This involved ordering Iraq to give up chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, dispatching inspectors to verify that process, and indefinitely extending sanctions that crippled Iraq's economy.

Those who advocate containment through inspections ignore that strategy's costly failure during the 1990s. Inspectors traipsed through Iraq for seven years as Baghdad defied or ignored one Security Council resolution after the next. The most dangerous chemical and biological weapons were not discovered for four years, and then only with the help of a defector. After that, Iraq stepped up its concealment operation, leaving thousands of tons of chemical and biological material and dozens of missiles missing; as inspector Hans Blix reported last week, they are still unaccounted for. Meanwhile, the Iraqi people suffered terribly, even as Saddam Hussein built new palaces. There were widespread reports of deaths through malnutrition and lack of medicine, and many Arab extremists, including Osama bin Laden, reaped political capital by blaming the United States. Eventually, the Security Council's will to maintain the containment regime collapsed, and in 1998 Saddam Hussein was able to drive out the inspectors.

At the time, there was broad consensus about the lessons and consequences of what had happened. Congress passed, and President Clinton endorsed, a resolution shifting U.S. policy in Iraq from containment to regime change. "In this century, we learned through harsh experience that the only answer to aggression and illegal behavior is firmness," Mr. Clinton said while he still occupied the White House. "If we fail to respond today, Saddam, and all those who would follow in his footsteps, will be emboldened tomorrow by the knowledge that they can act with impunity, even in the face of a clear message from the United Nations Security Council."

Yet Mr. Clinton did fail to respond. Saddam Hussein had four years to strengthen his arsenal, even as the sanctions effectively collapsed. According to Mr. Blix and Western intelligence agencies, he illegally imported hundreds of new missile engines and rebuilt production facilities. He created drones and mobile biological laboratories and sought nuclear material from several nations. Mr. Powell probably will add more to that indictment today. The Bush administration promised a tougher response, but only after Sept. 11, 2001, was it able to summon the will. President Bush, along with most of Congress and the American public, was driven to accept the point made by President Clinton: that the United States, and the world, cannot allow rogue regimes to build deadly weapons in open defiance of international law and the United Nations. The fresh documentation of al Qaeda's hunt for weapons of mass destruction, and the danger that it has or might acquire such weapons from Saddam Hussein, have only sharpened that point.

The people of Iraq and its region would benefit from an end to the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, who is guilty of some of the most terrible war crimes and human rights violations of the past 50 years. He has tortured, gassed and slaughtered his people and has invaded two neighboring nations. The liberation of Iraq's people would present the United States and its allies with a difficult and prolonged challenge of nation-building. If poorly handled—and reports of the admin-

istration's planning so far do not inspire confidence—the postwar era could inject serious new problems into a troubled region. But if the goal of preserving a unified Iraq under the administration of a democratic regime were achieved, it could give decisive impetus to nascent movements for reform that exist throughout the Middle East.

In the end, though, a war in Iraq would not be primarily a humanitarian exercise but an operation essential to American security. President Bush's move toward action on Iraq has not been a bolt from the blue or a departure from past U.S. policy, though the administration's clumsy handling of its arguments and allies has sometimes made it look that way. Nor must it be seen as an exercise in Mr. Bush's new doctrine of preemption, though ideologues on both sides would portray it as such. Rather, it is the completion of a vital mission of international security repeatedly confirmed by the U.N. Security Council, by a Democratic president and by bipartisan majorities of Congress. War is never to be welcomed. But a decade of failed diplomacy and containment has brought the nation and its allies to a point where war may soon be the only credible option for ending the threat of Saddam Hussein.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL DEAN,
POSTMASTER OF HUNTINGTOWN
POST OFFICE IN MARYLAND

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2003

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, the Huntingtown community in my district experienced a tragic and untimely loss, a loss to the U.S. Postal Service, a loss to the 5th District of Maryland, a loss to a community, and a loss to many close family and friends. I wish to take a moment today to pay tribute to the memory of Michael Dean, Postmaster of the Huntingtown Post Office in Huntingtown, MD.

Mike Dean tragically died following a motorcycle accident on January 9, 2003. He was a highly respected Postmaster who had been recognized on numerous occasions for his outstanding work with the Postal Service. On many occasions, he was given the opportunity to advance his career by accepting a well-deserved promotion. He always refused, preferring to stay and serve the community of his beloved "Downtown Huntingtown."

His accomplishments within the Postal Service, within his community, and within his church are so numerous that it is impossible to list them all. For the Postal Service, Mike will be remembered as a loyal and trusted co-worker. He was a teacher and mentor to newly appointed Postmasters. He was a person his manager or a fellow Postmaster could call upon when help was needed anywhere, at any time. He was active for many years in the National Association of Postmasters of the United States. To his employees at the Huntingtown Post Office, he was much more than just "the boss." He was a friend, advisor, teacher, and a leader by example.

Mike was appointed Postmaster of Huntingtown 24 years ago, and he grew along with the town. Until his death, the bond between Mike Dean and his community seemed unbreakable. He served people in every way imaginable with grace, humor, and always with a sense of selflessness. Mike served on the